

## INTRODUCTION

### **HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATURAL HERITAGE SURVEY**

The Natural Heritage Survey for Cabarrus County has coincided with several such surveys in this area of the Piedmont. Mecklenburg County conducted fieldwork for its survey from 1992-95. Gaston County performed its fieldwork from 1996 to 1998. Leadership for the Cabarrus County survey was provided by Dennis Testerman of the Cabarrus Soil and Water Conservation District with assistance of the late John A. (Johnny) Foil, Jr. then serving on the District Board of Supervisors. A Natural Heritage Advisory Committee was appointed to assist with the survey. A display was created at the Cabarrus County Fair with the help of Stonewall Jackson Training School, along with a landowner's survey form to attract public interest to the survey and to identify new potential sites.

Habitat Assessment and Restoration Program, Inc. (HARP) was contracted to perform the fieldwork and to assist in writing part of the final report. Fieldwork began in February 1997 and continued through the summer of 1999. Primary fieldwork was accomplished by Don Seriff, John T. Soule, and Lisa Gaffney. Dennis Testerman and Johnny Foil assisted with landowner contact. Letter and permission forms were drafted by the Soil and Water Conservation District for sending to owners of potential natural heritage sites. Dennis Testerman and Dr. Jim Matthews provided direction for the fieldwork involving plant communities.

Dr. Richard D. Brown, a former professor at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and a resident of Cabarrus County for over 20 years, was contracted to provide data on the wildlife of the county. His personal records served as the basis for the documented wildlife section of the report. The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission was contracted to provide an inventory of aquatic habitats and locations of rare and endangered species, focusing on freshwater mussels, aquatic snails and crayfish. This report was completed by Judith Johnson, non-game biologist, Piedmont Section.

### **THE BIODIVERSITY OF CABARRUS COUNTY**

Prior to this survey, there had not been a systematic effort to inventory the flora of Cabarrus County. The basis for the flora was the distribution maps developed during the 1950s for the *Manual of the Vascular Flora of the Carolinas* by Radford et al (1968) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Dr. Tom Daggy, late Professor of Biology at Davidson College, did collect in northwestern Cabarrus County during his career. His collection is now part of the herbarium at UNC Charlotte. With the proximity of UNC Charlotte to Cabarrus County, significant numbers of, albeit casual, plant collections were made from 1970 onward. Several UNC Charlotte students from Cabarrus County supplied voucher specimens for the university herbarium. These students included Wayne Williams from Concord and Mark Basinger from Rimer. Donna Ketron completed an M.A. degree at UNC Charlotte in 1988, doing a comparative flora of a 50-acre tract near Pine Grove Church Road. Ketron's observations on Cabarrus County flora mirror the findings of the current